X. Economic and Social Benefits

In this time of fiscal constraints, one element of the examination of any proposed expenditure must be a cost-benefit analysis. The proposed Action Transportation Plan is no exception.

Active Transportation Systems, integrating "Complete Streets", shared-use paths, and public transit, provide both personal and societal benefits when implemented. These benefits include lower transportation costs, greater social interaction, improved personal and environmental health, and expanded consumer choice. Under modest assumptions about shifting trips (remember that 40% of all trips are 2 miles or less[32]) to bicycling or walking, the resulting annual benefits will be worth close to 20 times the current level of federal funding for bicycle and walking. Even under current expenditures, fuel savings from short bicycling and walking trips alone offset current expenditures more than six-fold.[33]
Further benefits of Active Transportation are:

- Active Transportation makes Economic sense. A balanced transportation system can bolster growth and stability by providing accessible and efficient connections between residences, schools, parks, public transportation, offices, and retail destinations. Complete Streets can reduce transportation costs and travel time while increasing property values and job growth. Research shows that building walkable streets and lowering automobile speeds can improve economic conditions for both residents and business owners, and anecdotal evidence indicates that home values increase on streets that have received complete streets treatments or are near a shared-use path.appendix10a
- Active Transportation improves Safety. Complete streets reduce crashes through safety improvements. Shared-use paths reduce crashes by giving users an alternative route to their destination without potential conflicts with cars, this is especially true concerning youngsters. Action transportation also improves safety indirectly, by increasing the number of people bicycling and walking. A recently published international study found that as the number and portion of people bicycling and walking increases, deaths and injuries decline.[34]
- Active Transportation encourages more walking and bicycling. Public health experts are encouraging walking and bicycling as a response to the obesity epidemic. One study found that 43% of people with safe places to walk within ten minutes of home met recommended activity levels, while

In Minneapolis-St. Paul, for every 400 meters closer a median-priced home is to an off-road bicycle facility, its value increases by $510.[35]

just 27% of those without a safe place to walk were active enough. Residents are 65% more likely to walk in the neighborhood with sidewalks. A study in Toronto documented a 23% increase in bicycle traffic after the installation of a bike lane.

- Active Transportation can help ease Transportation Woes. Streets and paths provide travel choices while giving people the option to avoid traffic jams, and increase the overall capacity of the transportation network. Several smaller cities have adopted complete streets policies as one strategy to increase the overall capacity of their transportation network and reduce congestion. In Portland, Oregon, a complete streets approach has resulted in a 74 percent increase in bicycle commuting in the 1990's.
- Active Transportation helps Children. Streets and paths that provide room for bicycling and walking help children get physical activity and gain independence. More children walk to school where there are sidewalks. Children who have and use safe walking and bicycling routes have a more positive view of their neighborhood. Safe Routes to School programs, gaining in popularity across the country, will benefit from complete street policies and shared-use paths that help turn all travel routes into safe routes.
- Active Transportation is good for Air Quality. Air quality in our urban areas is poor and linked to increases in asthma and other illnesses. Yet if each resident of an American community of 100,00 replaced one car trip with one bike trip just once a month, it would cut carbon dioxide(CO_2) emissions by 3,764 tons per year in the community.
- Active Transportation makes fiscal sense. Integrating sidewalks, bike lanes, transit amenities, shared-use paths and safe crossings into the initial design of a project spares the expense of retrofit later.
- Active Transportation is good for Tourism. The Active Transportation system will enable visitors to travel to local destinations is a relaxed, safe, convenient, and accessible in a non-motorized mode. This creates a vacation atmosphere and entices them to remain in the community longer and return more often.

Further benefits and cost-benefit analysis is contained in Appendix 10b and 10c .

In 2000, overweight and obesity cost the U.S. $117 billion.[36]

In 2005, congestion caused 4.2 billion hours of travel delay and 2.9 billion gallons of wasted fuel, equaling a cost of more than $78 billion.[37]

Regular exercise reduces depression and improves self-esteem in overweight children.[38]

Kids who ride the bus in hale up to a million times more vehicle emissions than the average person outside the bus.[39]

Bicycle tourism brings $66.8 million to the Maine economy.[40]